

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1. – 7. (Cancelled).

Claim 8. (Currently Amended) An electrically activated switching valve for a high pressure pump, comprising:

a valve stem holding a valve member interacting that interacts with a valve seat on a valve housing wherein said valve stem is positioned between a high pressure line and a return flow duct of said high pressure pump;

a valve spring providing a force in a first direction on said valve stem and valve member;

a value valve guide for guiding said valve stem in said valve housing:

an activating device which, when activated, provides a force in a second direction opposite said first direction, to axially move said valve stem and

said valve member in said valve housing, [[and]] said valve member interacting with said valve seat on said valve housing to thereby determine a flow from said high pressure line through said valve, in a flow direction that corresponds to said first direction;

an annular space formed between said valve guide housing and said valve stem; and member, said

an annular space providing a contact area formed between the valve member and the valve seat downstream of said annular space, wherein said contact area is bounded on one side at a downstream edge thereof by a step adjoined by a flow optimizing guide surface configured to avoid cavitation resulting from said flow from said high pressure line through said valve.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented) The valve according to claim 8, wherein the step and the guide surface are arranged on the valve member.

Claims 10.-21. (Cancelled)

Claim 22. (Currently Amended) An electrically actuated switching valve for a high pressure pump, comprising:

a valve stem holding a valve member interacting that interacts with a valve seat on a valve housing wherein said valve stem is positioned between a high pressure line and a return duct of said high pressure pump;

a valve spring providing a force in a first direction on said valve stem and said valve member;

a valve guide for guiding said valve stem in an inner circumferential opening of said valve housing;

an activating device which, when actuated provides a force in a second direction opposite said first direction, to axially move said valve stem and said valve member in said circumferential opening of said valve housing wherein said valve member interacts with said valve seat on said valve housing to thereby determine a flow from said high pressure line through said valve, in a flow direction that corresponds to said first direction; [[and;]]

wherein said valve member has a step portion formed by a longitudinally extending offset in the upstream surface at a portion of said valve member, said step being concentric to said valve stem and having a radius defined by an offset in a radius of the valve member which exceeds a radius of said inner circumferential opening of said valve housing; and

Serial No. 09/529,365
Amendment Under Rule 1.114 Dated: November 20, 2006
Reply to Office Action Mailed: March 27, 2006
Attorney Docket No. 038738.48700US

wherein said step portion is adjoined by a flow optimizing guide surface which is formed in a radially outer portion of said valve member and is configured to avoid cavitation resulting from said flow from said high pressure line through said valve.

Claims 23. - 28. (Cancelled)